REMARKS

Claims 1-5 are pending in this application.

Applicant amends claims 1-4 more explicitly to recite the features of Applicants invention in the context of exchanges connected by a trunk and having chargeable dynamic signaling ports. These amendments are clarifying amendments. No estoppel is created.

The Examiner rejects, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), claims 1-3 and 5 as being unpatentable over Hamami in view of Li et al. (Li), and claim 4 as being unpatentable over Hamami in view of Li, and further in view of Brunson.

Applicant respectfully traverses the Examiner's rejections as follows.

Applicant's invention relates to synchronous time-division switching networks where at least two exchanges are connected by a trunk and have chargeable dynamic signaling ports. As explained in Applicant's Amendment filed December 12, 2003, the claimed invention provides a method for monitoring the use of such chargeable dynamic signaling ports so that when an application is assigned the right to use the port, the application may either set up the port for use, or only use the port if the port has already been set up.

At the outset, Applicant notes that both Hamami and Li focus on ATM networks, and therefore, are not directly applicable to Applicant's claimed invention which deals with monitoring of chargeable dynamic signaling ports provided in exchanges connected by a trunk.

In any event, Hamami discloses nothing more than a cache memory for use in ATM networks, wherein results of previous signaling processing are stored in the cache memory to enable each ATM switch to re-use the stored results. That is, in Hamami, when a new call

request matches a previously-processed call request, signaling processing may be bypassed for the new call request because results of identical processing are already stored in the cache memory and are fetched directly from the cache memory. *See* Id., col. 3, line 9 through col. 3, line 62. While Hamami indicates that its signaling cache "can be applied to other related processes including routing, resource allocation, etc." (see Id., col. 3, lines 7-9), nowhere does Hamami disclose, teach or suggest how provision of a signaling cache in an ATM network is even remotely related to monitoring of chargeable dynamic signaling ports, as recited in Applicant's independent claim 1.

On the other hand, Li discloses a system for transferring STM calls through an ATM network by "provisioning ATM edge nodes with apparatus which is adapted to send, receive and interpret common channel signaling messages related to STM calls and to dynamically map STM trunks to switched virtual circuits in a multi-service ATM network" (see Id., col. 2, line 26 through col. 3, line 65). In particular, Li discloses a system where:

> The ATM network 10 serves as a transport backbone for many varied data services. The PSTN 12 includes a plurality of time division multiplex switches 14, commonly referred to as service switching points (SSPs). Only two SSPs 14a, b are shown in FIG. 1. The SSPs 14a, b shown in FIG. 1 are tandem service switching points used to route interswitch calls in the PSTN. Such SSPs are found, for example, in local exchange carrier (LEC) tandem networks as well as in inter-change carrier (IEC) networks.
>
> As is well understood, in the art, the PSTN 12 includes and is largely controlled by an out-of-band signaling system known as a common channel signaling system. The common channel signaling system includes a plurality of signal transfer points (STPs) 16a-c which transfer common channel signaling messages between network nodes over common channel signaling links 18a-j The network nodes include, for example, SSPs 14a,b and a service control point (SCP) 20. The SSPs 14a,b exchange call control information over the common channel signaling links 18b,c,g and h for call setup and call release. The STPs 16a,b,c minimize the number of

> signaling links 18a-j required by serving as tandem switches in the signaling network to route messages to their destination. The SSPs 14a,b are also enabled to send query messages to the SCP 20 in order to obtain routing information for special service calls. Query messages may also be sent to the SCP 20 for number translations to support network functions such as Local Number Portability (LNP).
>
> The ATM network 10 operates with an asynchronous transfer mode protocol in which connections are established using virtual circuits. Virtual circuits share facilities in a prioritized schedule determined by each circuit's quality of service (QOS). The ATM network 10 includes a plurality of switching nodes 22a,b. The switching nodes 22a,b generally include an ATM switch fabric 24a,b controlled by a switch control element 26a,b. Auxiliary line cards (AX LC) 28a,b provide ingress/egress ports for transport links 30a,b in the ATM network 10. The construction of ATM switches 22 and ATM networks 10 is well known in the art.
>
> *See* Id., col. 5, lines 37 through col. 6, lines 16

Li describes in great detail how STM trunk identification information is translated into ATM switched virtual circuits (SVC) information to permit STM calls to be transported through the ATM network using virtual trunks, whereby the use of SVCs, rather than permanent virtual circuits (PVCs), allows for efficient use of network capacity:

> As is well known in the art, SVCs tie up network resources only so long as they are in use. Once released, the network resource is freed for use by any other service (Id., col. 6, lines 62-65; see also Id., col. 8, line 8 through col. 16, line 60).

However, while Li provides for efficient resource use in an ATM network by using switched virtual circuits, nowhere does Li disclose, teach or suggest monitoring a chargeable dynamic signaling ports of a trunk connecting two exchanges, including the assigning rights of use of the chargeable dynamic signaling port to an application, as required by Applicant's independent claim 1. Instead, Li simply utilizes an ATM network in order to achieve a more efficient use of resources when transporting STM calls.

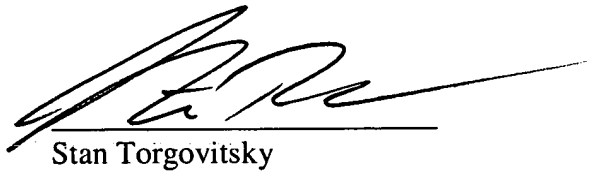
Brunson, which the Examiner cites for the alleged teaching of a "concept of assigning time to the use of ports" (see Office Action, paragraph 13), does not supply the above-noted deficiencies of Hamami and Li.

Therefore, Applicant's independent claim 1 and its dependent claims 2-5 (which incorporate all the novel and unobvious features of their base claim) would not have been obvious from any reasonable combination of the cited prior art references.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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